



# How to Drive Culture Change and Reduce Violence in Your Hospital

# MAKE NONVIOLENCE A REALITY

Whether you have one, two, or twenty people driving change within your hospital, it takes a commitment from everyone to make a safe culture a reality.

So how do you balance outstanding patient care, meet regulatory requirements, and provide for patient and staff safety—all in a fast-paced and constantly changing environment? How do you work together throughout your hospital to ensure safety for everyone?

Creating a culture of nonviolence is no small task, but it is certainly necessary for providing quality care for patients and employees.

This guide will help you drive a new culture of care: one that prevents risks and injuries for everyone.

You'll find five tips to reduce violence starting now, followed by five strategies to drive change in the long term.



# 5 TIPS FOR REDUCING VIOLENCE IN YOUR HOSPITAL

While crisis situations can escalate quickly, they can often be minimized or prevented before they can spin out of control. Share these tips with staff to start managing and preventing violence immediately.



## TIP 1 REDIRECT OR REFOCUS CHALLENGING QUESTIONS.

*“How come it always takes so long for the doctor to see me?”*

*“Who’s going to make me?”*

*“Why do I have to do that?”*

These questions can come quickly and are often followed by others that are even more challenging.

While some questions are genuinely information-seeking in nature, others are meant to challenge your authority in a variety of ways. Those are the questions you feel yourself compelled to answer with “Because I said so.”

But that’s not a productive answer.

A useful approach is to restate your request or directive. Be mindful of your tone of voice and body language. Ignore the challenge, but not the person.



## TIP 2

### ISOLATE VENTING INDIVIDUALS.

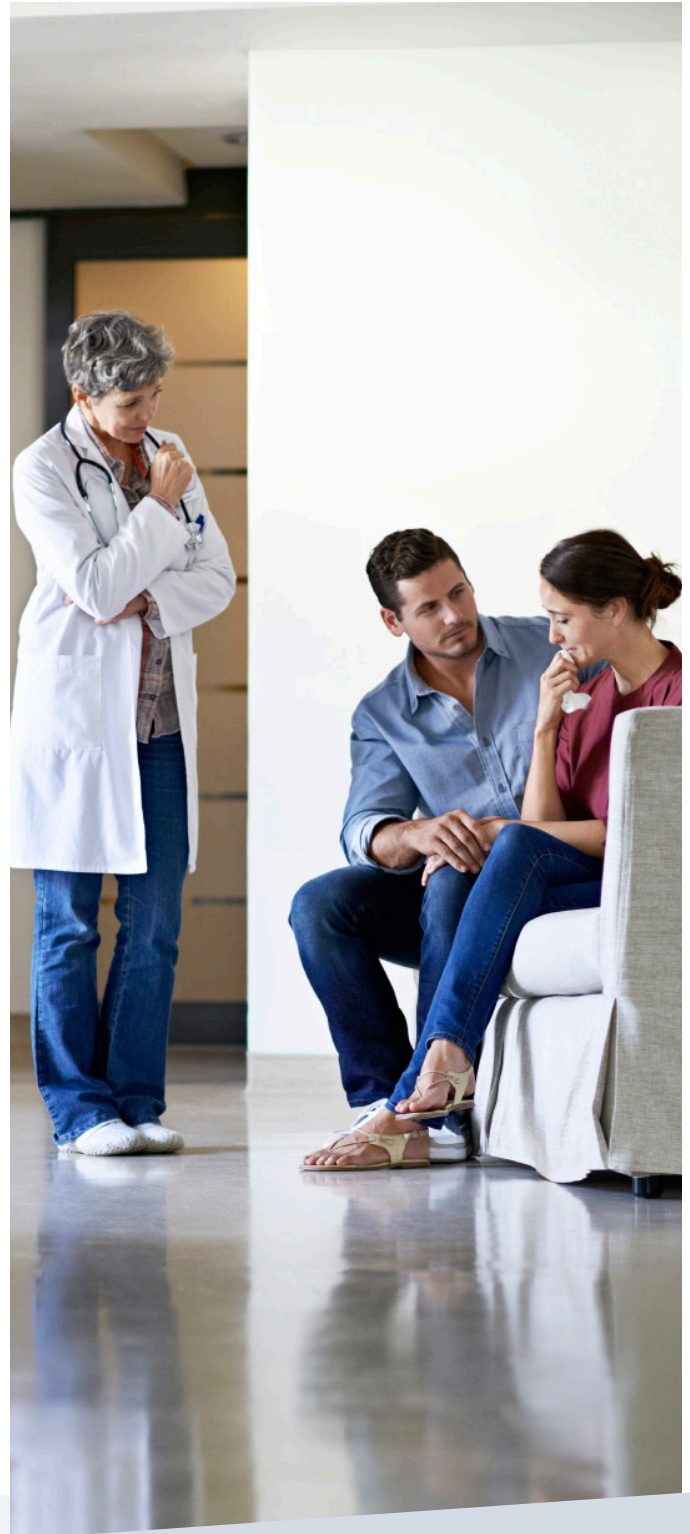
We all want to have our say in a matter.

Even if we don't get our way, but we get our "say," we'll feel a whole lot better about a situation if we can release some frustration through words.

The trouble is that, in many settings, there are others around who could be frightened, disrupted, or bothered by venting. It's also possible that bystanders will begin feeding into the venting or even egging it on.

Validate the importance of the issue for the venting individual, but see if you can discuss their concern somewhere where there's more privacy and fewer distractions.

This will enable you to really focus on what the person is telling you—and it will help you find a solution to the problem.





## TIP 3

### USE TEAMWORK.

Sometimes a fresh face brings a fresh approach to a situation.

If you find yourself caught in a power struggle (it happens to all of us), a great way out is to say, “You know what, I don’t think I’m being very helpful to you right now.

Can I see if my colleague can help you?”

Let’s face it—we’ve all asked to “see the supervisor.” And even when a second person gives the same response as the previous staff member, it can often become acceptable coming from someone else.



## TIP 4

### **TAKE ALL THREATS SERIOUSLY AND ASSESS THEIR VALIDITY.**

Threats come in a variety of verbal and nonverbal forms.

The scary thing about threats (other than the threat itself sometimes) is that there is no way to predict whether or when someone might follow through on a threat they've made.

Make sure your organization has clear protocols for staff to follow in the event that a threat is made.

Consider:

- Where the threat should be documented.
- Who it should be reported to.
- Who will gather to make a plan to respond in the event of follow-through.





## **TIP 5**

### **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.**

The job of a health care worker, regardless of the setting, is stressful and at times dangerous. You must come to work mentally and physically prepared for your day.

Find positive outlets for the negative energy that you have to absorb during your day so that you can stay in control of your own behaviors during a crisis moment.